

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN ON TURKEY

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ROWLAND EVANS AND ROBERT NOVAK COLUMN
APPEARING IN APRIL 22 "WASHINGTON POST", DATELINED ANKARA:

1. BEGIN TEXT. TURKEY'S TROUBLED "U.S. CONNECTION".
PRIME MINISTER SULEYMAN DEMIREL, THE FOREMOST AMERICANIST
IN THE BITTER ELECTION CAMPAIGN BEING FOUGHT OUT HERE,
RECEIVED A FLUFFY NO-COMMENT REPLY WHEN HE ASKED PRESIDENT
CARTER EARLIER THIS YEAR FOR AN END TO U.S. PRESSURE ON
TURKEY AND RESTORATION OF THE OLD INTIMACY. DECLINING TO
DISCUSS DETAILS OF HIS LETTER OR THE REPLY, DEMIREL NEVER-
THE LESS LEFT NO DOUBT IN AN INTERVIEW WITH US THAT THE
BREAK BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES--TRIGGERED BY THE 1974
ARMS EMBARGO AND TURKEY'S CLOSING OF U.S. BASES HERE--WAS
HAVING A PROFOUND IMPACT ON TURKISH POLITICS.

2. DEMIREL MAY BE ABLE TO DEFEND HIS TWO-YEAR RECORD AS
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PRIME MINISTER AGAINST INCREASINGLY HARSH ATTACKS FROM HIS
MAIN OPPONENT, LEFT-LEANING BULENT ECEVIT, ON SUCH TRADI-
TIONAL ISSUES AS THE ECONOMY, GROWING STUDENT TERRORISM,
SOARING UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION. HIS REAL VULNERABILITY
IN THE JUNE 5 ELECTION, HOWEVER, WILL BE HIS INABILITY TO

EXPLAIN WHY THE UNITED STATES HAS SUBORDINATED ITS NATO

ALLIANCE WITH TURKEY TO THE RELATIVELY INCONSEQUENTIAL GREEK-TURKISH DISPUTE OVER CYPRUS. "I CANNOT DEFEND THE U.S. IN THIS CAMPAIGN," DEMIREL SAID, "AND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. IS CERTAIN TO BECOME A VERY BIG ISSUE. ALL I CAN DO IS DEFEND MYSELF AND MY FEELING FOR THE U.S. I CAN SAY THIS IS A GOOD--WAS A GOOD--RELATIONSHIP." DEMIREL WANTS CARTER TO TAKE ONE POSITIVE STEP: PERSUADE CONGRESS TO APPROVE THE U.S.-TURKEY DEFENSE AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH FANFARE 13 MONTHS AGO. THAT DOES NOT MEAN SIMPLY TALK ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION'S HOPE THAT CONGRESS WILL APPROVE THE NEW DEFENSE PACT AND ITS PROVISION FOR GRANT MILITARY AID, AS EXPRESSED BY VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE WEDNESDAY. IT MEANS A SUSTAINED WHITE HOUSE COMMITMENT TO MOVING THE AGREEMENT THROUGH CONGRESS. LACKING THAT, DEMIREL CAN BE PAINTED INTO A CORNER BY ECEVIT--ACCUSED OF SIGNING A MEANINGLESS AGREEMENT THAT HE CANNOT PERSUADE THE UNITED STATES TO CARRY OUT.

3. BEYOND THIS SURFACE POLITICAL FACT, A PSYCHOLOGICAL SHIFT IN TURKISH POLITICS IS BUILDING THAT TRANSCENDS ANY AGREEMENT: A POTENTIAL SHIFT OF THE POLITICAL BASE, DOMINATED BY STRONGLY PRO-AMERICAN FORCES FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES, TO SOMETHING NOT YET DEFINABLE BUT DEEPLY FOREBODING FOR THE UNITED STATES. IN SHORT, THE GROWING PERCEPTION HERE THAT THE U.S. CONNECTION APPARENTLY CANNOT SURMOUNT THE ISSUE OF CYPRUS HAS PROVIDED AN OPENING FOR POLITICAL TRENDS THAT SEE TURKEY'S FUTURE IN WHOLLY DIFFERENT MODES.

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4. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO OVERSTATE THIS DANGER, BUT HISTORICAL FACTS POINT STRAIGHT TO IT. WHEN MODERN TURKEY, ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING DEMOCRACIES, WAS FOUNDED ON THE RUINS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE BY ATATURK AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR, IT FOLLOWED CONSCIOUS NEUTRALITY UNTIL JUST BEFORE THE END OF WORLD WAR II. AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S FOREMOST MOSLEM STATE, IT HAS DEEP CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL TIES TO THE MIDDLE EAST. CONTACTS HAVE BEEN GROWING BETWEEN YOUTHFUL MILITARY OFFICERS IN TURKEY'S SUPERB ARMY AND SUCH RABID, ANTI-WESTERN RADICALS AS LIBYA'S QUADDAFI.

5. SERIOUS TURKISH POLITICIANS NOW WARN PRIVATELY THAT WITH THE AMERICAN CONNECTION COMING INTO QUESTION, A NEW POLITICAL MOVEMENT FOUNDED ON MOSLEM NATIONALISM AND LOOKING EAST AND SOUTH CANNOT BE RULED OUT. AN EXPERIENCED BRITISH DIPLOMAT PUT IT GRAPHICALLY TO US: "WHAT IS YOUR COUNTRY DOING? MY GOD, IF THE SOVIETS COULD DETACH TURKEY FROM NATO THE RESULT WOULD BE CATASTROPHIC."

6. ECEVIT HIMSELF SUGGESTED THAT POLITICAL CHANGE STIMULATED BY U.S. PUNISHMENT FOR THE CYPRUS INVASION COULD LEAD TURKEY DOWN NEW ROADS. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH US LAST WEEK IN ISTANBUL (WHERE HE WAS CAMPAIGNING IN A WHITE, ALL-PURPOSE CAMPAIGN BUS TOPPED WITH LOUDSPEAKERS), HE SAID HE BELIEVES DEMIREL TO BE "VERY VULNERABLE" BECAUSE OF U.S. FAILURE TO APPROVE THE NEW DEFENSE AGREEMENT.

7. "THE TURKISH PEOPLE ARE NOT ADVENTURERS," HE TOLD US, "BUT THEY KNOW THEY CAN NO LONGER RELY EXCLUSIVELY ON AMERICAN MILITARY AID AND COOPERATION. WE MUST LEARN TO TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES BUT WITHOUT UPSETTING THE BALANCE IN THE WORLD. WE KNOW THE WORLD IS NOT WHAT IT WAS MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO (WHEN TURKEY JOINED NATO) AND THAT WE CAN AFFORD TO FOLLOW A MORE FLEXIBLE POLICY." REFERRING TO THE GREEK LOBBY IN THE U.S. CONGRESS, HE SAID: "I DO
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NOT CRITICIZE ETHNIC POLITICS. THAT IS FOR YOU TO DECIDE. BUT WE MUST EVALUATE IT REALISTICALLY."

8. DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS OF DECAY IN THE AMERICAN CONNECTION, THE SOVIET GIANT TO TURKEY'S NORTH HAS CONDUCTED AN IMPECCABLY CORRECT POLICY HERE, WAITING FOR THE
"REALISTIC EVALUATION" TO RIPEN. THE KREMLIN'S PROGRAM TO EXPLOIT THE BITTER FEELINGS HERE FOR THE UNITED STATES-- AND WHAT MOSCOW HOPES TO ACCOMPLISH--WILL BE DISCUSSED IN A FINAL REPORT FROM TURKEY. END TEXT.
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